

RUN THE RACE | HOPE CHAPEL

THE GRACE OF GOD

Who He Is, What He Does, How He Moves
Ben Humphrys | Sunday 3 August 2026 | 9AM Gawler

Big Idea: *The Holy Spirit is not a force, a feeling, or a theological category. He is a person - the third person of the Trinity - and he has been present, active, and personally invested in God's people from the very first breath of creation.*

Introduction - The Forgotten Person

Ben had planned to preach something else this week. But walking through the week and into Sunday morning, he felt a consistent, gentle prompting that this was the message for today. He almost didn't act on it - but that, he says, is often the way the Holy Spirit moves. Gently. Persistently. Easy to ignore. Possible to grieve. But unmistakably present to those who have learned to listen.

The Holy Spirit is the most misunderstood, most misrepresented, and most neglected person of the Trinity. We talk easily about God the Father - creator, sustainer, the one who loves us. We talk constantly about Jesus - the one who died and rose, the one we follow. But the Spirit often gets reduced to a feeling we chase on a Sunday, a theological category we acknowledge but rarely think about, or a force we invoke rather than a person we actually know.

The Holy Spirit is not a feeling. He is not a force. He is a person - the third person of the Trinity - and he wants to be known.

This message is for the person who is intellectually certain the Spirit exists but has never really met him. It is for the person who experienced a powerful encounter years ago but isn't sure what to do with it now. It is for the person who is quietly afraid of what 'Holy Spirit stuff' might look like - and the person who has been so wounded by charismatic excess that they have quietly shut a door they were never meant to shut.

1 | Who He Is

We begin at the very beginning - not with Pentecost, not with Jesus' baptism, but with creation itself.

Genesis 1:1–2 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

Before a single word was spoken. Before light existed. Before anything had form or name. The Spirit was there - hovering, brooding, present. Not waiting for something to happen. Not summoned when needed. He was already there in the formless, in the darkness, before the first day began.

The Hebrew word for hovering is the same word used for a mother eagle hovering protectively over her young. It is not a passive hovering. It is a tender, watchful, purposeful presence - attentive and ready.

A Person, Not a Force

The Spirit is referred to throughout Scripture with personal pronouns. Jesus calls him the Paraclete - the helper, advocate, counsellor - and uses the masculine 'he' consistently. He has a will. He has feelings. He makes decisions. He speaks.

- He can be grieved - Ephesians 4:30
- He can be quenched - 1 Thessalonians 5:19
- He intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express - Romans 8:26
- He distributes spiritual gifts as he determines - 1 Corinthians 12:11
- He searches the deep things of God - 1 Corinthians 2:10

You cannot grieve a force. You cannot quench a feeling. You cannot have a relationship with an it. The Spirit is a he - a person fully equal in the Trinity with the Father and the Son, who has chosen to make his home inside every believer.

1 Corinthians 3:16 *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*

Reflect: *Have you ever thought of the Holy Spirit as a person you are in a relationship with, or more as a power you access when needed? What would change in how you approach your daily life if you genuinely thought of him as someone who lives with you?*

2 | What He Does

His work is vast - but Ben drew out five things the Spirit does that are directly relevant to our lives right now.

He Convicts

John 16:8 *When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment.*

Conviction is not condemnation. Condemnation says: you are what you did, and there is no way back. Conviction says: this is not who you are, and there is a way forward. The Spirit convicts because he loves - and he convicts with enough precision that you know exactly what he is talking about. That restlessness you feel when you know something isn't right. That is him.

He Guides

John 16:13 *When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.*

Not all at once. Not a full GPS view of the whole journey. But step by step. Ben described getting directions on his phone as he drives - he doesn't need to know the whole route, just the next turn. The Spirit guides the same way. The next step. The next conversation. The next decision. He doesn't overwhelm you with the whole picture - he lights the next step and asks you to trust him with the rest.

He Empowers

Acts 1:8 *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses.*

The disciples were not told to manufacture courage or muster up boldness. They were told to wait - and then to receive. The power is not generated by us. It is given. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the power available to every believer who has received the Spirit. That is not a small claim.

He Transforms

2 Corinthians 3:18 *We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Transformation is the Spirit's long game. Not the dramatic moment alone - but the slow, faithful, daily work of making you more like Jesus. Ben has been a Christian for many years, and he says the fruit that has grown most quietly in his life - patience, compassion, gentleness - has been the slow work of the Spirit over decades. Not a single prayer meeting. A lifetime of presence.

He Intercedes

Romans 8:26–27 *The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.*

There are moments when we genuinely do not know how to pray. The situation is too raw, too confusing, too painful, or too big for words. In those moments, the Spirit does not wait for us to find the right language. He picks up where our words run out and carries our aching to the Father himself. We are never without an advocate.

Reflect: *Which of these five - conviction, guidance, empowering, transformation, intercession - do you most need from the Spirit right now? Have you asked him specifically for that?*

3 | How He Moves

This is where many Christians become uncomfortable - or where some have been burned before. Ben spoke honestly from his own experience and from Scripture.

Like the Wind

John 3:8 *The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.*

You cannot manufacture the wind. You cannot schedule it. You can open the window - but you cannot make it blow. The Spirit moves sovereignly, according to his own will and timing. Our job is not to produce him but to position ourselves where he is moving - open windows, open hearts, open hands.

Like Fire

Fire purifies and fire warms, but fire also consumes. The Holy Spirit is not safe in the sense of being tame. He will touch things in your life that need to change. He will consume habits, attitudes, and patterns that are not of God. He will also bring warmth - a deep, settled sense of God's presence and love that no circumstance can fully extinguish.

Like Living Water

John 7:38-39 *Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive.*

Rivers don't stay in one place. They move. Living water brings life wherever it flows. The Spirit's movement in a life is not an inward pool that sits still - it is a river that flows outward, into relationships, into communities, into the dry and thirsty places around us.

Gently and Persistently

Ben shared how this very message came about. A quiet, consistent prompting through the week. Not a thunderclap. Not a dramatic vision. Just a gentle, persistent sense that this was what was needed today. He almost ignored it. He has learned not to.

Elijah discovered this on the mountain. The Spirit was not in the earthquake, not in the fire, not in the great wind that tore the rocks apart. He was in the still, small voice that came after all of that. The Spirit often moves in the quiet - and it takes a quiet heart to hear him.

1 Kings 19:12 *After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.*

How do you create a quiet heart? Ben offered three practical answers:

- Come to Sunday worship with expectation, not just attendance. Arrive ready to receive, not simply to observe.
- Develop a daily quiet time - not as a duty but as a conversation. Bring your day, your questions, your fears, and simply sit with him.
- Learn to pause before you respond. In a decision, a conflict, a moment of pressure - take a breath and ask: Spirit, what do you want to do here?

Reflect: *When did you last hear the still, small voice? What got in the way? Is there noise in your life right now that is crowding out what the Spirit is trying to say?*

A Personal Word from Ben

Ben shared that early in his Christian life, he encountered the Holy Spirit in a way that was deeply personal and transformative. He doesn't speak about it often, because he is aware of how differently people receive this kind of testimony. But he wanted to say it clearly today:

The Holy Spirit is the most real relationship I have ever experienced. Not a concept. Not a Sunday feeling. A person I have walked with, argued with, learned from, been corrected by, been comforted by, and been sent by.

If you have never had a personal encounter with him, I want to invite you to ask. Not to perform. Not to look spiritual. Just to ask. He is already in you if you are a believer. The question is not whether he is there - it is whether you have introduced yourself.

Conclusion - He Has Been There All Along

WHO HE IS	WHAT HE DOES	HOW HE MOVES
A person - not a force. Present from creation. Living in you.	Convicts, guides, empowers, transforms, intercedes.	Wind, fire, water. Gently. In the still, small voice.

The Spirit has been hovering over your life since before you knew God had a plan for you. He was present before the form took shape. He has been brooding, attentive, watchful,

purposeful - the whole time. He has not abandoned you in the dry seasons. He was there in the silence. He is here now.

The question is not whether the Spirit is present. He is. The question is whether you will open the window, quiet the noise, and let him move.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Use these on your own during the week, or with your LifeGroup.

1. Ben said the Spirit is the most misunderstood, misrepresented, and neglected person of the Trinity. Has that been true in your experience? Do you find it easier to relate to God the Father or Jesus than to the Spirit? Why?

2. The Spirit can be grieved and quenched - which means our choices affect the relationship. Is there anything in your life right now that may be grieving or quenching him? What would repentance and re-opening look like?

3. Of the five things the Spirit does - conviction, guidance, empowering, transformation, intercession - which one do you most need right now? Have you asked him specifically for that?

4. Ben said the Spirit guided him into this very message through a gentle, persistent prompting during the week - which he almost ignored. Have you had moments like that? What happened when you acted on it, or what happened when you didn't?

5. He offered three practical steps: come to worship with expectation, develop a daily quiet time as a conversation, and learn to pause before responding. Which of these three is hardest for you? What would one small change look like?

6. Ben said the question is not whether the Spirit is present - he is. The question is whether you will open the window and let him move. What is one practical thing you could do this week to open the window?

Key Scriptures This Week

- Genesis 1:1–2 - The Spirit hovering over the waters at creation
- John 16:8 - He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment
- John 16:13 - He will guide you into all truth
- Acts 1:8 - Power when the Holy Spirit comes on you
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 - Transformed into his image by the Spirit
- Romans 8:26–27 - The Spirit intercedes with wordless groans
- 1 Corinthians 3:16 - You are God's temple; his Spirit dwells in you
- Ephesians 4:30 - Do not grieve the Holy Spirit
- 1 Thessalonians 5:19 - Do not quench the Spirit
- John 3:8 - The wind blows wherever it pleases; so it is with the Spirit
- John 7:38–39 - Rivers of living water will flow from within
- 1 Kings 19:12 - After the fire came a gentle whisper

